

Dear XXXXXXXX,

I am writing on behalf of Unleash The Beach, a local grassroots organization founded in 2004. Since we began less than four months ago, we already have 2,000 supporters. Unleash The Beach is concerned with the views of local political representatives, with regard to issues of dog owner/guardianship in the Santa Monica area. In the belief that dogs help enable us to connect as a community, we are seeking a regulated area on the Santa Monica Beach where we can socialize and recreate with our neighbors and their dogs.

Dog owner/guardianship is an important aspect of life in Santa Monica. In fact, based on data from the 2000 census and the American Veterinary Medical Association, there are an estimated 14,000 households with dogs in the city of Santa Monica. Given the prevalence of dogs in our daily lives, it is no surprise that off-leash dog recreation is becoming increasingly important, especially to Santa Monica's active, outdoors-oriented population.

Furthermore, studies have consistently shown that well-exercised and well-socialized dogs are better behaved, less aggressive, and better neighbors.

Despite these facts, not one acre of Santa Monica's 245 acres of beachfront contains legal off-leash recreation to the city's 84,000 residents. Thus, one goal of Unleash The Beach, SM, is to advocate a more equitable use of our public beach space for off-leash recreation.

We are targeting a lesser-used area of the beach, between lifeguard stands 11 and 12 and west of the existing storm drain fence in that section. It comprises roughly 4.8 acres—less than 2% of the beachfront. To access this area, one must walk approximately 470 feet west of the bike path.

We have looked at the examples of 58 existing successful dog beaches, finding that not one has a degradation in the environment, or in health, safety, or liability issues. We have also been looking

closely at the regulations that help make these urban dog beaches work, such as Long Beach, Huntington Beach, San Diego, San Francisco and Santa Barbara. We feel we are in a position to cooperate with our local and state governments to create a successful pilot program.

Accordingly, in order to assess the views of all Council people and candidates in the upcoming City Council election, I have enclosed a one-page questionnaire through which we would like to solicit your opinions with regard to this issue. We would greatly appreciate it if you would complete this survey within the next week, and return it to us in the envelope provided by Oct. 12. We are sending this to you via email as well and you may choose to reply to Georja@UnleashTheBeach.org

We will share the results of this survey, including nonresponses, with our growing 2,000 members via a newsletter published prior to this year's election as well as in the local press. Also, as a group we may decide on endorsement of those candidates who share our vision for responsible dog owner/guardianship in Santa Monica.

Thank you for your time in completing and returning this survey. We appreciate any ideas you have that are consistent with our aims of responsible dog owner/guardianship for the sake of all community members.

Yours truly,

Georja Umano Jones
President, Unleash The Beach, SM